

# OCCUPANT PROTECTION

## ***I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW***

### **Seat Belts**

California competes with six states in the nation to hold at or above 90 percent seat belt compliance. While the combined estimated 2003 populations of Arizona, Hawaii, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon and Washington (the competing states) is 26.6 million, they do not compare to California's population of 35.5 million. California's 2006 rate is 93.4 percent (August 2006), this represents 32.1 million persons wearing seat belts. However, the fact remains that 3,400,000 Californians are not utilizing restraint systems, and are therefore, at higher risk for death or injury, if involved in a collision. California conducted its third teen statewide seat belt observational survey. The 2006 survey teen seat belt use rate is 90.8%, up from 88.6% in 2006. While the teen seat belt compliance rate has increased 8.2 percentage points since the first survey in 2004 with a rate of 86.6, more efforts need to be focused on that population.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) 2006 Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) provisional data reports 67.5 percent of vehicle occupants killed in automobile collisions were using seat belts. In the last five years (2002 to 2006), the percentage of occupants killed in automobile collisions and using safety belts increased by 14 percentage points from 53.7 percent to 67.5 percent.

Persons considered "high-risk," (e.g., teens, non-English speakers, and those in the lower socioeconomic classes) remain involved in a disproportionate number of fatal and injury collisions. The rich diversity that typifies many communities in California contributes to the vitality and strength of the state as a whole. At the same time, it presents a number of challenges for health departments, law enforcement, and community based organizations committed to addressing occupant protection. This high-risk group requires special education and programs targeting cultural and language barriers. In California, we continue to see an increase in ethnic and linguistic groups. According to the new projections by the California's Department of Finance Demographics Unit, the Hispanic populations will constitute the majority of California by 2040. By the middle of the century, the projections indicate that Hispanics will represent 53.6 percent of the state's population, with Caucasians comprising 23.3 percent, the Asian population at 12.1 percent; the African American population at 6.4 percent, the Pacific Island population at less than one-half of one percent, and Native American and people of more than one race 2.1 percent each. (2000 U.S. Census) Media campaigns will target teens, Spanish, and non-English speaking populations. In addition, health departments will utilize networks and relationships with ethnic communities to address traffic safety issues for the populations they represent.

In order to focus on the teen population, high schools are conducting High School Seat Belt Challenges to raise awareness and promote safety belt use through good-natured, student run competitions. OTS is funding the CHP to administer mini-grants to high schools, whereby high schools challenge other schools within a school district to compete against each other to determine which school has the highest safety belt usage, which school can demonstrate the most improved safety belt usage rate and which school ran the best overall awareness campaign for safety belt usage. The competition takes place over a two-week period with designated students, or student coordinators, taking on the majority of the responsibility for running the program. The challenge involves two unannounced

observations of student safety belt usage as they enter campus to determine a percentage of students wearing their safety belts. The first survey is conducted before the beginning of the awareness campaign. The second observation is conducted towards the end of the awareness campaign. The results of the observations indicate the effectiveness of the safety belt awareness challenge. Awareness campaigns include activities such as school assemblies, development and dissemination of promotional materials such as posters, flyers and newsletters, among other things. As an added component to the teen statewide seat belt observational survey, schools that participate in High School Seat Belt Challenges are also used as school sites for the teen statewide observational study. They will be evaluated separately to determine effectiveness of their educational programs.

California continues the national theme “Click It or Ticket” for the Buckle Up America May 2008 mobilization. The 2008 enforcement period will be expanded by one week prior to the beginning of the national two-week campaign and California will use a “Click It or Ticket” logo developed for the state.

An OTS Seat Belt Mini-grant program, in partnership with the University of California, Berkeley will fund local grants to conduct enforcement programs addressing the motorists who fail to buckle their safety belts. The grants will provide overtime for officers to specifically and solely enforce occupant protection laws. The goal of the “Click It or Ticket” campaign is to increase seat belt use statewide to 94 percent by June of 2008. This will be accomplished through the combined efforts of CHP, OTS, and local law enforcement. OTS mini-grants will be awarded to local law enforcement agencies and state university and college police departments. The maximum mini-grant amount will be based upon the population of cities and a maximum \$10,000 for state college and university police departments. Over 2.8 million dollars will be distributed to law enforcement agencies to offset overtime and reporting costs for the May 14 – June 3, 2008 campaign.

Traffic fines for failing to use seat belts and child safety seats increased in 2004 to a maximum of \$89 for a first offense and \$191 for a second offense for adult violations (16 years and older) and \$340 for a first offense and \$871 for a second offense for child violations.

### **Child Passenger Safety (CPS)**

California’s child safety seat use rate is 87.8 percent (August 2006). Child passenger safety remains a difficult topic to master because of the constant technical changes in laws and regulations, and development of new products. California’s focus is to increase the child passenger safety compliance rate. Programs will train NHTSA Child Passenger Safety technicians and instructors, but most of all, conduct child passenger safety restraint checkups, create fitting stations and conduct educational presentations.

National research on the effectiveness of child safety seats has found them to reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants (less than one year old) and by 54 percent for toddlers (1-4 years old) in passenger cars. For infants and toddlers in light trucks, the corresponding reductions are 58 percent and 59 percent, respectively (National Center For Statistics and Analysis – Lives Saved Calculations for Infants and Toddlers, March 2005).

## **II. ACTION PLANS**

California's population continues to increase, with a growth of 1.21 percent, representing over 443,000 new residents in California (California Department of Finances 2005 Demographic Report.) The Office of Traffic Safety continues much needed funding to keep up with the new population totals, provide an ongoing effective occupant protection program that assures the public is educated and motivated to use seat belts and child safety seats on every ride. A combination of legislative mandates, enforcement, public information campaigns, education, and incentives are necessary to achieve significant, lasting increases in occupant restraint usage.

The purpose of the 405 incentive grant program is to reinforce key elements of a strategy to encourage states to enact and strengthen occupant protection laws and provide for the enforcement efforts related to the laws. The program will provide for NHTSA's Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training, the certification and re-certification program for the technician and instructor level candidates, and provide for child passenger safety seat check ups and fitting stations. The Department of Health Services (DHS) provides assistance to The California Office of Traffic Safety with the statewide coordination of child passenger safety efforts in California. Through the Vehicle Occupant Safety Program, DHS staff assists local agencies by providing technician training and resources to counties and regions in need. In addition, staff also facilitates the Child Passenger Safety Quality Task Force, made up of state and local public health, law enforcement, nurses and hospitals, fire fighters, EMS, California Safe Kids, independent and community-based organizations, and veteran advocates throughout the state, which serves as an advisory body and reviews CPS materials to be distributed in California. The Task Force continues to work on strategies for advancing the statewide child passenger safety infrastructure, to include data collection and analysis, multi-level communication, and professional development to sustain interest and involvement in this field.

### **OCCUPANT PROTECTION ASSESSMENT**

This evaluation provides the Office of Traffic Safety the opportunity for an outside review of California's occupant protection program. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides a nationally recognized team of experts to evaluate current status and provide recommendations for improvements/enhancements on programs related to seat belt use and child passenger safety.

## **III. TASKS**

### ***TASK 1 - PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION***

This task provides for the necessary staff time and expenses incurred by OTS that are directly related to the planning, development, coordination, monitoring, auditing, and evaluation of grants within this program area, and the preparation of the 2008 Highway Safety Plan. Funding is also provided in this task for the printing of brochures and pamphlets, distributing literature and media materials developed through successful grants, or obtained from other sources. Assistance is also provided under this task to individuals to attend and participate in technology transfer workshops, training sessions, or educational meetings or conferences.



## ***TASK 2 - COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY OCCUPANT PROTECTION GRANTS***

These grants conducted by county health departments and school districts include activities with schools, churches, medical facilities, law enforcement, courts, media, civic groups, large and small businesses, governmental agencies, etc. These grants develop child safety seat programs that educate and train on the correct use of safety belts and child safety seats. Activities include: conducting media events, public information campaigns, child safety seat check ups, child safety seat and seat belt surveys, high school seat belt challenges, educational presentations, court diversion classes; disseminating educational literature; and distributing low cost or no cost child safety seats to low income families.

<b>Grant #</b>	<b>Fund</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>FFY 2008 Funds</b>
OP0603	402	Solano County	\$0
OP0605	402	San Mateo County Health Department	\$4,457
OP0607	402	San Francisco	\$36,797
OP0609	402	Lake County	\$48,221
OP0701	402	San Bernardino County	\$236,908
OP0702	402	Oroville	\$106,216
OP0703	405	Yolo County	\$128,084
OP0705	402	Tulare County	\$411,553
OP0709	402	Siskiyou County	\$72,625
OP0710	402	San Diego	\$215,034
OP0803	402	Los Angeles	\$719,200
OP0804	402	Glendora	\$117,727
OP0805	402	Riverside County	\$141,635
OP0806	402	Solano County	\$174,972
OP0808	402	Long Beach	\$190,358
OP0809	402	San Francisco County	\$170,119

## ***TASK 3 - ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION OCCUPANT PROTECTION GRANTS***

These grants conducted by law enforcement and fire personnel include enforcement and education to increase the use of safety belts and child safety seats. Activities include: conducting media events, public information campaigns, child safety seat checkups, child safety seat and seat belt surveys, educational presentations; disseminating educational literature; providing NHTSA Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician training; distributing low cost or no cost child safety seats to low income families; and serving as fitting stations.

<b>Grant #</b>	<b>Fund</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>FFY 2008 Funds</b>
OP0604	402	California Highway Patrol	\$0
OP0611	402	San Carlos Police Department	\$3,318
OP0708	402	University of California, Davis	\$417,840
OP0802	402	Rancho Cordova	\$221,351
OP0706	402	Modesto	\$160,866

## ***TASK 4 - STATEWIDE USAGE SURVEYS***

**402**

### **OP0402 - CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO RESTRAINT USAGE SURVEYS PROJECT**

The Restraint Usage Surveys Grant continues into fiscal year 2008. Two annual statewide surveys will be conducted in the summers of 2007 and 2008 to determine seat restraint usage rates of front seat occupants (and infant/toddlers in any seat) for autos, vans, and non-commercial pickup trucks on non-highway and highway roads. A probability sample, using NHTSA approved methodology, of 80 non-highway and 80 highway intersections will be made. A CHP sample using similar methodology and sampling of 113 highway sites will be incorporated in sampling procedures. A partial sample of 80 sites (40 non-highway and 40 highway) will be drawn from the statewide sites described above, before and after the Memorial Day holiday weekend(s). Pre and post tests comparisons will be made. A statewide survey of 100 high school sites will collect and analyze seat belt usage rates for high school drivers and passengers at campus sites. The results from the statewide and high school survey will be analyzed using the CARP program, a special U.C. Berkeley survey program and in-house SPSS statistical routines using criteria and statistical procedures approved by NHTSA. (\$2,083)

### **OP0801 - CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO STATEWIDE SEAT BELT, CHILD SAFETY SEAT, AND TEEN SEAT BELT USE SURVEYS**

Estimates of seat belt usage rates of vehicle occupants on state and local roads and facilities are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of NHTSA funded occupant safety programs. Six surveys are planned. Four summer and spring surveys will estimate seat restraint usage rates of front seat occupants (and infant/toddlers in any vehicle position) on non-highway and highway roads. Pre- and post-test will be run on subsets of survey data collected in the spring and summer. Two fall surveys of 100 high school sites will be collected to estimate seat belt usage rates for high school drivers and passengers at high school campus parking lots. (\$211,112)

## ***TASK 5 - STATEWIDE CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY TRAINING***

**402**

### **OP0810 - VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY PROGRAM CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**

VOSP will continue to provide statewide coordination with its state and local partners to more effectively offer child passenger services for children ages 0-6 statewide. Objectives include collaborating with Health Officers, health departments, local Child Passenger Safety Programs, court systems, and others to provide education and programs to help motivate drivers and occupants to use appropriate occupant restraints for all children ages 0-6. (\$500,000.00)

**405**

### **OP0704 - CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL STATEWIDE HIGHWAY RESTRAINT ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN (SHREC)**

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) will implement community outreach and enforcement measures statewide that are designed to increase seat belt usage for all as well as to increase the proper use of child passenger restraint systems (CPRS) for children at or below

the age of six. The grant goals are to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries in collisions in which victims were not using safety equipment. Objectives support the goals by providing statewide CPRS checkups, distributing child safety seats, and conducting public awareness presentations, where educational items are to be distributed. (\$1,668,708)

#### ***TASK 6 – INNOVATIVE GRANTS TO INCREASE SEAT BELT USE***

This task includes a public information and education campaign, enforcement activities, mini grants for agencies, and personnel to coordinate those efforts.

**402**

##### **OP0612 - CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL**

##### **STATEWIDE "HIGH SCHOOL SEATBELT CHALLENGE" PROGRAM**

Through the combined efforts of the California Highway Patrol (CHP), the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), local law enforcement, and high schools throughout the state. The CHP will provide mini-grants to high schools throughout the state to administer the challenge. Additionally, the CHP will conduct enforcement campaigns in areas near high schools. The campaign waves in October 2006, February 2007, October 2007, and February 2008, will be four weeks in duration, with the public awareness outreach element conducted continuously throughout the academic year, and the enforcement element conducted for two weeks during each of the four-week media campaigns. (\$1,241,962)

#### ***TASK 7 - MINI-GRANTS TO INCREASE SEAT BELT USE***

**405**

##### **OP0807 - UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY**

##### **STATEWIDE "CLICK IT OR TICKET" MINI GRANT PROGRAM**

An important element in reducing serious injury in traffic collisions is the use of passenger restraint devices by all persons riding in a motor vehicle. Consequently, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration requires every state to conduct an annual survey to establish the state's seat belt use rate. Since 2002, California has conducted a program of increased seat belt enforcement through the use of paid overtime to the California Highway Patrol and local law enforcement agencies during national mobilizations. Continued enforcement is necessary to encourage compliance with occupant restraint laws and to increase the state's seat belt use rate. The state seat belt use rate rose from 92.5% in 2005 to 93.36% in 2006

❖ UNDER 5000	\$ 7,000
❖ 5,000 – 50,000	\$15,000
❖ 50,001 – 100,000	\$25,000
❖ 100,001 – 150,000	\$40,000
❖ 150,001 – 250,000	\$65,000
❖ OVER 250,001	\$90,000

State University/College Police Department Maximum \$10,000

An announcement regarding requests for mini-grants is scheduled for October 2008 with a deadline of December 2, 2008. The mini-grants will only cover the May 2008 mobilization period using Section 405 funds. (\$3,000,000)